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Middle East Scholar

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A University of Dayton student is the recipient of a prestigious national scholarship that allows him to further his study of the Middle East while taking classes in the United Arab Emirates.

The William Jefferson Clinton Scholarship will pay the full tuition and housing costs for junior John McGinnis when he attends the American University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, this spring. McGinnis is looking to complete his certificate in Middle Eastern Studies, taking classes such as "Arabic Literature Translation" and "Islamic Politics."

McGinnis, who is pursuing a double major in international studies and Spanish, spent this past fall studying at the Arabic Language Institute, which is part of the American University in Cairo. Additionally, his work with the University of Dayton's Center for Social Concern allowed him to participate in international service trips to the Dominican Republic and Belize and to study Spanish in Guatemala.

"I am definitely looking forward to the coursework and learning more about the Middle East from an analytical standpoint," McGinnis said. "Apart from that, I am excited to live in a place that is often depicted as the 'Disney World of the Middle East.' It will be interesting to witness many of the attractions that have brought together such a plurality of cultures."

McGinnis' interest in international studies extends beyond his classes and traveling. His involvement in the University's International Learning and Living Community residence program helped him gain a better understanding of other cultures and incorporate them into his everyday life.

McGinnis plans to apply to a variety of graduate schools, service programs and government positions after he graduates.

"I have always wanted to pursue a career that helps those in need, and my experiences abroad have helped me narrow my focus to international development," he said. "Some of my dream careers include owning my own international business, becoming a diplomat, and working for the United Nations."

The William Jefferson Clinton Scholarship is awarded to 10 U.S. students a semester, with a preference for students interested in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies. The scholarship aims to strengthen the efforts of establishing global interdependence.

McGinnis' use of the scholarship falls in line with the University's mission of "Learn, Lead, Serve."

"John is a leader for other students who may be considering an option like this but did not think it was possible," said Tricia Barger, the associate director for the Center for International Programs. "He is an example of how a student can connect and integrate both local and global learning opportunities to create such a deep and powerful experience."

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